

September 23, 2020

Chairman Lyle Larson
House Natural Resources Committee
Via email: Shannon.Houston_HC@house.texas.gov

Re: House Natural Resources Committee Formal Request for Information

Dear Chairman Larson,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide input on important water management issues in Texas that impact private property rights. I am specifically commenting on the topic, **“Emerging issues in groundwater and surface water interaction, in particular in areas of increasing competition for scarce resources.”**

I AM A NATIVE TEXAN, I WAS INTRODUCED TO THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY IN THE LATE 1940'S WHEN OUR FAMILY BOUGHT ACREAGE OURSIDE INGRAM . OUR PROPERTY HAD SPRINGS AND CREEKS THAT FLOWED YEAR ROUND. I WATCHED THE DROUGHT OF RECORD IN THE 1950'S AND ITS EFFECT ON OUR SPRINGS THAT NEVER STOPPED FLOWING. IN THE YEAR 2000 , MY WIFE AND I BOUGHT OUR OWN PLACE IN THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY OVER IN BLANCO COUNTY WITH SPRINGS ON THE PEDERNALES. THIS PEACE OF GODS COUNTRY WAS OUR CHILDHOOD DREAM SINCE MY EARLY YEARS OUTSIDE INGRAM. WE ARE TRYING TO RESTORE OUR PROPERTY TO ITS CONDITION WHEN A GREAT UNCLE OWNED A RANCH ON THE DIVIDE OUTSIDE HUNT. I HAVE SEEN THE CHANGES THAT DEVELOPMENT HAS BROUGHT TO OUR BELOVED HILL COUNTRY AND I PRAY WE CAN SAVE WHAT WE HAVE AND BRING BACK WHAT WE HAVE KILLED AND TEMPORARILY LOST IN SPRING AND RIVER FLOW.

As a landowner who is devoted to ensuring that springs continue to flow, I am very concerned about declining groundwater levels in Texas. This is why I, along with other like-minded landowners across the Hill Country and Edwards Plateau, have formed the Headwaters Alliance – a coalition of landowners advocating for spring flow protection.

I appreciate your interest in this topic. It is my recommendation that this Session of the Legislature consider adopting a mandate that all future development in Texas be required to be “Aquifer Neutral” until the State has an opportunity to determine the precise ways in which aquifer levels effect spring flow and how spring flow effects river flow and how river flow effects the fresh water inflows to our estuaries, bays, bayous and gulf that support our native fisheries, oysters, shrimp , crabs and other life in Texas.

Our Constitution requires our government to protect our natural resources. No other natural resource is more important to sustaining life on the planet earth and in our Great State of Texas than our natural water resources. You cannot have life without water and it is clear that our aquifers and our surface water have critical relationship to each other. As Gunner Brune has shown in his book on Springs of Texas, we have already lost over half of our historically significant springs in the Texas Hill Country since the 1970's.

In my opinion, our Texas Water Development Board has abdicated its job to protect our water resources by not reading their dictionaries definition of “ Desired”.....I find nothing desirable about our amazing natural resource we call the Colorado River for which our TWDB has mandated a “DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION OF “NEGATIVE FLOW” BY THE YEAR 2060!”

SPRING FLOW IS ESTIMATED TO GENERATE ONE THIRD OF OUR RIVER FLOW. SPRINGS COME FROM AQUIFERS OVERFLOWING INTO SPRINGS, CREEKS, STREAMS AND RIVERS . WHILE THE EXACT RELATIONSHIP GALLON FOR GALLON MAY NOT BE SCIENTIFICALLY QUANTIFIABLE AT THIS TIME IN OUR UNDERSTANDING HYDROLOGY OF THE WATER CYCLE SYSTEM THEY PRIME, THE EFFECT IS UNDENIABLE!.....OUR SPRINGS HAVE BEEN DYING WITH EVERY AQUIFER REDUCTION IN WATER LEVEL APPROVED BY OUR TWDB AND OUR GOVERNMENT IN AUSTIN. OUR RIVERS ARE GOING TO DIE AND LIFE THAT IS SO DEPENDENT ON WATER IS DEFINITELY BEING THREATENED.....POSSIBLY IRREVERSIBLY!!!!!!

THE TIME TO STOP THE SLOW DEATH OF OUR STATE IS NOW WHILE THERE IS TIME TO SAVE THE SPRINGS AND POSSIBLY REVERSE THE SPRING LOSS OF THE PAST. IT MAY EVEN BE POSSIBLE TO RECOVER THE SPRINGS WE HAVE INTENTIONALLY KILLED!.....KILLING THE BUFFALO SLOWLY WAS NOT GOOD BUT BRINGING THE BUFFALO BACK SHOULD BE AN INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US THAT THERE IS HOPE FOR OUR SPRINGS , RIVERS AND ESTUARIES, BAY AND GULF AND THE WILDLIFE THEY SUPPORT.

NOW IS THE TIME TO STOP THE SLOW DEATH OF OUR AQUIFERS AND THEIR DEPENDENT SPRINGS AND RIVERS ESTUARIES, BAYS AND GULF AND WILDLIFE THEY SUPPORT.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION NOW !!!!!!!

\

Thank you for your consideration and your service.

Respectfully,

M. HARRIS GREENWOOD

XXXXX